

Application No.: 10/666,732

Docket No.: 2038-297

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An elastically stretchable nonwoven fabric, comprising:

elastically stretchable first fibers made of a first polymer and inelastically stretchable second fibers made of a second polymer; and intermittently distributed attaching areas in each of which at least one of the first fibers is attached to at least one of the second fibers;

wherein

said second fibers are free of attachment to said first fibers outside said attaching areas; each segment of said second fiber extending between two adjacent said attaching areas is longer than an associated segment of said first fiber extending between said adjacent attaching areas;

~~the number in each of said attaching areas, 4 to 16 of said second fibers are attached to is in a range of 1 to 16 per each one said first fiber; and~~

each of said first fibers has a cross section ~~portion~~ comprising convex and concave portions alternatingly arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross section ~~portion~~, each said concave portion defining a bottom of a groove extending in a longitudinal direction of said first fiber.

2. (previously presented) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, further comprising opposite surfaces, wherein said first fibers lie inside and said second fibers lie outside in one of said surfaces.

3. (canceled)

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4. (previously presented) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, further comprising opposite surfaces, wherein one of said surfaces has a slip angle of 25° to 40°.

5. (original) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said first polymer is selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic polyurethane and thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.

6-10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said first polymer comprises thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant; and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based and polyamide-based polymers.

12. (currently amended) A nonwoven fabric, comprising:
elastically stretchable first fibers of a first polymer;
inelastically stretchable second fibers of a second polymer; and
intermittently distributed attaching areas in each of which at least one of the first fibers is permanently attached to at least one of the second fibers;

wherein at least two [[each]] of the second fibers [[is]] are attached to [[one]] each of the first fibers multiple times in a plurality of said attaching areas arranged longitudinally of said first fiber, and a length of each said second fiber extending between two adjacent attaching areas among the plurality of said attaching areas is greater than and detachable from a corresponding length of said first fiber extending between said two adjacent attaching areas; and

each of said first fibers has a cross section consisting of two convex portions and two concave portions alternatingly arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross section.

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13-14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 12, ~~wherein each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross portion, each said concave portion defining a bottom of a groove extending longitudinally of said first fiber.~~

16-17. (canceled)

18. (previously presented) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 12, wherein said first polymer is selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic polyurethane and thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.

19-21. (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A nonwoven fabric, comprising a plurality of conjugate fibers attached to each other in intermittently distributed attaching areas;

each of said conjugate fibers comprising an elastically stretchable first fiber of a first polymer and at least one inelastically stretchable second fibers of a second polymer in compatible incompatible with the first polymer, said first and second fibers being inseparable in said attaching areas and separable outside said attaching areas;

each of said conjugate fibers further comprising, between adjacent said attaching areas in which said conjugate fiber is attached to other said conjugate fibers, a split section in which the first and second fibers are separate from each other and in which a length of said second fiber is greater than a corresponding length of said first fiber;

wherein

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each of said conjugate fibers further comprises, between adjacent said attaching areas in which said conjugate fiber is attached to other said conjugate fibers, at least a unsplit section which is adjacent one of said adjacent attaching areas and from which said first and second fibers branch;

each of said conjugate fibers has a plural number of said second fibers;

~~The nonwoven fabric according to claim 21, wherein~~ each of said first fibers has a cross ~~section portion~~ comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross ~~section portion~~, a number of said concave portions being equal to the plural number of said second fibers, each of said concave portions defining a groove extending longitudinally of said first fiber, and in said unsplit section, each of said second fibers being located in one of the grooves of the first fiber; and

in said unsplit section, each of said convex portions has a region which is furthest from a central axis of said first fibers and which is exposed.

23. (canceled)

24. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim ~~[[23]]~~ 22, wherein said cross ~~section portion~~ has the same number of said convex and concave portions.

25. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim ~~[[23]]~~ 22, wherein said cross ~~section portion~~ has at least three said convex portions and at least three said concave portions.

26. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim ~~[[19]]~~ 22, wherein said first polymer comprises thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.

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27. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 22, wherein said cross section has two said convex portions and two said concave portions.

28. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 22, wherein said cross section has four said convex portions and four said concave portions.